THE WORKING MAN: A PROBLEM;

A LECTURE,

Delivered at the Mechanics' Institution, Manchester, November 6th, 1875,

BY

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The Central Co-operative Board, while circulating this tract, which appears to them full of interesting and instructive matter, must observe that the responsibility for the statements and opinions contained in it rests solely with its author, by whom the Lecture was delivered without any previous communication with the Board.

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THE WORKING MAN: A PROBLEM.

I don't know whether the conviction is stronger amongst the rich or the poor, that various orders or classes of men are necessary and must be permanently maintained in the world; but I think it worth while to remind you, that in the book to which professing Christians attach more authority than even to the statutes of the realm, are two or three announcements of importance to the discussion of this evening, and which will form the keynote of my lecture.

1st. "And God said, let us make man in our own image, and after our own likeness" not orders of men, or classes of men, but man, the family of man.

2nd. And when, according to the same authority, the first misfortune came, and it was decreed—"In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," there was no exemption made or foretold; the subject of the curse was not sent or to be sent into bondage to work for other men, but left simply to provide for himself and his offspring, by cultivating the earth and by tending animals. The misfortune was not to one man, but to all men, to the family of man.

How the different orders and classes of men originated, and how they have been sustained, it is not important for our purpose to enquire; we may rest satisfied that they are not God made, and are not inherently necessary to society; and that the church exhortation to "be obedient to your pastors and masters," is not an order of the

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universe, but simply an expedient by our rulers, to maintain peace and order under the existing state of things.

It is common in modern days to say that the tailor makes the man; old Æsop knew a great deal better, when he wrote the tale of a daw dressed in peacock's feathers, and the tale of the ass in the lion's skin; showing the ridiculous results of the experiment of trying to appear other than we are in reality. There is a great deal more truth in the adage that "education makes the man;" but even education of the most excellent kind must not be expected in one generation to undo or to make up for the neglect of ages. Jas. Pierrepoint Greaves wrote "as being is before knowing and doing, I affirm that education can never remedy the defects of birth." Education, I take him to mean, may and will improve the character, but cannot change the nature of its subject.

G. H. Lewes, in his "Problems of Life and Mind," argues very learnedly, and at the same time very simply, to the effect that the capacity of the individual and of the race for education, continually extends under the process; that in fact, the mind like the body is strengthened by proper food and proper exercise, so that what is difficult to-day to do, becomes easy to-morrow; and that the sensitiveness to learning of any given kind, is as transmissible to future generations as are family features or peculiarities of bodily structure; that in fact we lay up knowledge, not only in books, but in the brain fibre of the student; and he sets down a great deal of what is now automatic action (action without effort, and almost without active perception), to continued practice, from generation to generation, of the particular action in question; and a great deal of what we now call instinct, to the mental exertions of former generations, having rendered the predisposition so strong in the offspring, as almost to need no effort on their part to acquire excellence in the direction indicated.

I presume that we all of us know the amazing difference between the wild pansy, the "love in idleness" of the hedge bottoms (a flower of about half an inch diameter), and the immense variety of garden pansies, some of them measuring two inches across the petals, and of every possible hue of colour between white and black. Most of us probably know also the pretty crane's bill, with its thin knotted stem, and its

deeply serrated leaves, and small purply pink flower, growing on every sunny bank, and frequently amongst the stones of a newly-made road; but it requires an exercise of faith to trace the insignificant original through its numerous and beautiful progeny, the splendid geraniums of our summer flower-beds, and the variegated pelargoniums of our greenhouses. And yet, if we have noted the care and expense devoted by the nurseryman or amateur gardener year after year to the selection of proper soil, to the most favourable temperature, and the best liquid food for his plants, our surprise would be greater if no improvement followed his efforts, than it is to see the difference between the wild and the cultivated plant. And if we have noted the eager delight of the gardener at the appearance of what he calls a "sport," with new markings, and the care with which he cuts off and plants and tends that shoot, in the hope of perpetuating a new variety; or if we have noted how he places plants of different varieties together for what is called cross fertilisation, our surprise would be greater if permanent varieties did not increase, than it now is to be told that the hundred kinds which do exist are all referable to one original.

Do my hearers know what would take place if the gardener or the amateur cultivator ceased to cultivate; if the greenhouse were neglected, the fires let out, the glass left unrepaired, the fruit trees unpruned, the land left fallow and unmanured?

Why, the tender plants would die, and the hardy ones would rapidly degenerate and fall back into the conditions from which only the unceasing care of generations has brought them out. Our eyes would soon lose the intense pleasures of the summer parterre, and our vegetable food (if similar neglect extended to the fields) would soon become coarse and scanty beyond anything which we can now conceive.

Now listen to the parallel. It is a matter of not the slightest importance to my argument whether it be assumed that man was originally perfect and fell away, or whether the original man is represented in the present day by the bushman of Africa or the native Australian, whilst the European nations have, owing to favourable circumstances, risen to a higher degree of civilisation in some respects than previous ages have ever known; all I care to impress

is, that if man has fallen, the fall was common to all men; and that if man has only risen, it is possible, by opportunity and effort, to make the rise a common one. I only want you to feel that what the fifteenth Earl of Derby is intellectually to-day, or what the shorter lineaged but even more illustrious William Ewart Gladstone is, that may the grandson, if not the son, of John Smith the tailor, Thomas Jones the shoemaker, Charles Robinson the joiner, or Henry Brown the machine fitter become, by taking advantage of opportunities, by continuous prudence and carefulness, and by constant effort after improvement—not that the whole race of Smiths', Jones', Browns', or Robinsons' may in one or two generations achieve such excellence, but that some of them may do so, whilst all will be immensely improved by the effort, even in that short space.

Let that feeling once get firm hold of the minds of the present working class adults, and be sedulously instilled into the rising youth, and we shall soon see a passion for improvement developed in the mass of society (instead of in a few individuals), a passion which will produce the greatest and most peaceful revolution amongst us ever seen in the world. But that revolution won't come out of mere reading and writing education (often forgotten almost as soon as learned); it won't come about by snatching children away from school to work at the earliest possible moment, (which whatever may be the present gain, is a great permanent loss, even in money, and an incalculable loss in the deprivation of future literary enjoyment); and it is only natural to suppose that the affection and care of children for their parents in age, will be some proportion to the early efforts and sacrifices of the parents for their children. Professor Max Muller spoke very truly when he said education is expensive, but it is an investment; and an investment of the most profitable kind. The practical commentary on that statement is, that the present condition of the civilised nations of the world is wholly due to the educational investments of the past; and he who wishes to see at one glance the value of education, need only compare the African kingdom of Dahomey, where, on the death of a king, hundreds of subjects are killed, so that they may attend him in the next world, with the realm of Queen Victoria, and he has it all before him. I may as well say that

my own faith in human progress is great, and that I cannot conceive of retrogression when the whole mass are educated; were it otherwise, my public work would cease from the hour of the conviction.

It will be said, and the saying is very pertinent, that in every large town, even of these dominions, are thousands of human beings who in vices far exceed the worst savages, whilst our agricultural labourers *en masse* do not much exceed them in intellect; and I shall be asked to account for the position of this town residuum, and for this bucolic mass of ignorance.

There is nothing more easy. The first condition necessary to civilisation is physical comfort, and in modern England, as in ancient Greece and Rome, this condition was for a long period pretty much confined to the lords of the soil and to their immediate dependents, including the clergy, who, before the Reformation, were composed for the most part of favourites, selected from amongst the poor. Force originated landlordism, and landlords naturally became a distinct class, with slaves to minister to their physical luxuries, whilst the clergy ministered to their intellectual wants. Out of these ministrations grew art and artizans, science and learning, cities and freemen; thus constituting a middle-class, and inaugurating the continuous struggle of class against class, which has continued down to the present hour, and which will continue so long as classes exist. A considerable and increasing proportion of society has thus evaded the so-called curse, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." But nature is stronger than individual man, and forces those who will not work at productive labour to resort to play or sport, which, if it were imposed on artizans or labourers as work, would very soon lead to a strike. Nevertheless, this sport is the road to physical health, for all who are not otherwise usefully employed.

And now that we have referred to the struggle of classes—which to me is the strongest possible proof that society is not at present properly constituted and has not reached its final form—let us see what has been accomplished in the past, so that we may be able to speak reasonably of the future, so far as we in England are concerned.

Land under William the Conqueror, and during many subsequent reigns, was national property, and was held

subject to suit and service to the king, whilst cities gave voluntary contributions of money to the king's wars and his other needs. This feudal condition was afterwards exchanged for a land tax of 4s. in the £ on the annual value; and this tax, in the reign of William the 3rd, produced about a quarter of the revenue of the crown; now it produces about one-seventieth, because the assessment has never been revised, and because a large part has been redeemed at the old assessment value. In other words, it used to produce seventeen times its present proportion of the taxes. Thus the burden of the rich landholders has grown comparatively less from generation to generation, and the taxes have been left more and more to the poorer classes, until now, customs and excise levies make more than half the total income; being raised for the most part on food, drink, and clothing. However, notwithstanding the inevitable tendency of things to fulfil the scripture declaration, "Unto him who hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; and from him who hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath;" we shall still find progress enough in the past to inspire us with hope, and I think I may say with confidence, for the future of the working classes.

It is not yet more than 50 years since Henry Brougham found it necessary in Parliament to declare it criminal for man to hold property in man. Indeed the trade in slaves was only made illegal in England 71 years ago, and it is only 43 years since we paid £20,000,000 to slaveholders to abolish slavery in our colonies; and some of the most exciting public meetings within my remembrance were anti-slavery meetings, held to forward the abolition of colonial slavery.

In 1832 the large modern towns first achieved representation in Parliament, and henceforward the middle-class fairly divided the governing power with the landowners; wealth became partner with aristocratic birth in the ruling power, and commerce and literature have since that date vied with war in winning aristocratic titles. And soon afterwards the Established Church had to abandon some portion of its monopoly, and to admit the proscribed Roman Catholics and Jews into municipal corporations, on to the Bench of Justice, into the House of Commons, and even into university fellowships; whilst they had also to give up forcing Dissenters to pay church-rates, Easter dues, and vicars' rates.

Still the hewers of wood and drawers of water were practically enslaved: for, although it is about 90 years since colliers in Scotland were transferred with the estates upon which they lived, it is only about 40 years since a lot of agricultural labourers were transported from Dorsetshire to a felon colony, for actions which are now perfectly legal; and although the institution of day schools for the poor commenced early in the century, yet some of our best men were imprisoned as late as 1836 for selling perfectly harmless if not very high-class literature to the poor. The year which saw the opening of the first international exhibition (1851) also enabled people for the first time to advertise their wants without paying a tax to Government for doing so; and it was not until 1861 that the manufacture of paper, the vehicle of literature, was free from the polluting touch of the excise-man; whilst the law requiring newspaper proprietors to give security against libel, thus enabling the Government to punish the innocent for the guilty, was only repealed during the last session of Parliament. The avowed object of Pitt in imposing these taxes, was to prevent the spread of intelligence, and right well did they perform his will. Some people talk of the immorality of Government drawing a revenue out of the materials of vicious indulgences: to me it always seemed a much greater evil to tax the vehicle of knowledge, and so perpetuate ignorance. I would rather tax vice, or the vehicle of vice to the uttermost, so that the trade in its materials should no longer tempt men by large profits to build gaudy traps for their fellows, than leave some men to grow rich by making others poor and vicious.

The laws which forbade men to combine for mutual protection were swept away in 1835; those which purposely made food dear for the benefit of the landowners, were overcome in 1846, when the duty was reduced to 1s. a quarter from the 1st Feb., 1849; whilst laws which shortened the hours of labour for women and children,—laws which admitted the compound householder and the lodger to the franchise, abolished the Parliamentary qualification, and adopted household suffrage in the boroughs, with the enactment of secret voting, all came in rapid succession from the middle-class Parliament. And these various enactments do practically hand over the power of rule, so far as the boroughs

are concerned, to working men, whenever they become worthy to use it,—for they constitute the vast majority of voters, and are now safe from undue influence. Well might Robert Lowe say, when the last Reform Bill was passed, "It is time we taught our masters their letters!" The last few years have also produced laws enabling combinations of men to trade, to hold land and shares, and in fact to do anything *en masse* which can legally be done individually; and Mr. Geo. Howell (one of the best of working class leaders) says, that the Labour Act of last session has put an end to class legislation, and has, if anything, put the trades unionist workman into a better position in regard to conspiracy than his master. And, best of all, the year 1870 saw it decreed that education is the birthright of every child, and its fulfilment a national duty. We used to be told by the philosophers, that education was the right and duty of the parent; that if it were given to the Government they would have a staff of pensioned employés all over the country, who would be used to depress liberty; that there was no such necessary connexion between ignorance and crime as the advocates of education assumed, and that education would really make more progress if left to voluntary effort.

Well, the first School Board was elected in November, 1870, and the first compulsory bye-laws were sanctioned in November, 1871, and now, within four years of this first action, we begin to hear in Manchester, in Liverpool, and in London, of the decrease of juvenile crime. And strange, indeed, it would be were it otherwise, for in Manchester and Salford alone more than 600 wholly neglected or incorrigible children have been picked off the streets, and put under good training and constant care in industrial schools. If this course did not make an impression, we might well give up to the philosophers, and say, alas, the connection between ignorance and crime is not proved, and we must look elsewhere than to education for a remedy.

But where are we now? I started by showing that orders and classes of men were not God made, and are not therefore a necessity of society, that they commenced in violence, and have been continued by the monopoly of land, by the shifting of taxation, and by unjust laws against workmen. I have shown that the growth of a middle class and the increase of wealth in towns, has waked up intelli-

gence in the masses, brought the aristocracy to terms, and established theoretical equality throughout the Parliamentary boroughs of the kingdom. The church prayer book says, "Naked we came into the world, and it is quite certain that we can take nothing out of it," and the clergyman adds that we are all equal in the sight of God; and we know now, that we are all equal before the law. This being so, the working man having attained entire freedom of action, I feel inclined to ask, what will he do with it? We have heard of people being advanced too rapidly, of men who can't carry corn! I want to ask, will working men continue to tax themselves by their habits of drinking and smoking, by idleness and by strikes, to ten times the amount required from them by imperial taxation? Or will they rise to the dignity of their position, and feel that it is their proud lot to contribute to the necessities and the elegancies of life, not only for themselves but for the whole world; and that the more and the better work they do, the higher will be their reward, not only in mere money wages, but in the intellectual and moral enjoyment which money can neither give nor take away? Will the day worker ever, when half-past five strikes, instead of thanking God that his day's work is done, look at that work with pride, and thank God that it is well done; not that he has done enough for 5s., but that he has done all of which his body and mind were healthily capable? and that his night's reading and his social intercourse will be sweetened by the sense of a duty well performed.

Will not artisan working-men, having now struck down all barriers to their own progress, having opened all the avenues to distinction for themselves, think also of throwing down the barriers by which they are themselves surrounded, and through which they attempt to dictate what youths shall or shall not be admitted into the practices of their craft? Will they not cease to bleed themselves in the shape of strikes, in order to cure the weakness of inefficient wages? Will they not learn that it is capital seeking profitable occupation which makes work plentiful, and that strikes tend to rapidly lessen capital by continuing to consume and ceasing to replace it?

If artisan working-men could learn these simple facts, and treat all their fellow-men with the equality which they themselves now get from the law, the beggars in our streets,

and the inmates in our workhouses, would soon be reduced almost wholly to the vicious, instead of being, as in too many cases, the victims of unforseen and unpreventable misfortunes.

Look now to the position of the son of the poorest man in Manchester, and see what his prospect may be. Elementary instruction may be had at the cost of the ratepayers; pupil teacherships are open for the clever scholars, at wages; the School Board pays the fees for pupil teachers at the science classes; there are free seats at the Grammar School, with scholarships and exhibitions to be won at the Owens College, or in the ancient universities; there are exhibitions at the Owens College and Queen's scholarships (to be held in London or Dublin), open to the students of the science classes; and there are permanent situations in Government departments, to be won by the Queen's scholars. Here is the ladder already set—from the poorest home into a Government department, with power to turn aside, at the proper point, from the university into the church or the legal profession. A young man who does not choose to go the whole distance, may take the pupil teachership, and find useful and honourable employment as a schoolmaster. Or the successful student of science may find profitable commercial occupation, and with economy and prudence perhaps become an honoured merchant. All these avenues are opened by the Education Act, which literally parallels the gospel invitation, and says, come, buy learning and honour without money and without price. And, suppose a youth having passed through the elementary school, chooses to go to a mechanical trade, and to earn wages at once, he may still attend the evening science classes at the literary institutes for a trifling fee, and by studying mathematics, practical mechanics, and building construction, either win a Whitworth scholarship or fit himself to fill the place of foreman, and, ultimately, of employer, and so find full occupation for his developed faculties. And for the youth who does not soar even so high, but is satisfied to remain amongst the crowd, and to live a quiet life,—the public parks in summer, and the free libraries in winter, will afford pleasant, healthful, and agreeable occupation for leisure hours, and thus sweeten his toil; and I hope that before many years are over we in Manchester may imitate Liverpool and Birmingham,

and provide an art gallery, with free admission, for the improvement of the public taste. You will note that I have descended from the great family of man to the denizens of Manchester; but you will readily see that what is possible in Manchester may easily be made to apply elsewhere.

Now, having shown the possibility of procuring good instruction, and the advantage of being well educated, let me add a word as to its necessity, in order to prepare artisans for inevitable changes in the various kinds of employment. In my boyhood handlooms for the production of silk goods were the rule, the figures being wrought by the varying number of treadles set in motion by the feet of the weaver, who also worked the batten with his hands. In the Leeds Exhibition, which closed on Saturday last, I saw a ribbon loom at work with some twelve or fourteen spaces, making four or six pieces of figured ribbon in each space, the six-shelved shuttle rack, as well as the warp harness or healds, being worked by the jacquard machine, and the whole being put in motion by the same steam engine, which sufficed for all the other machinery in the building. Where now are the handloom weavers?

When I came to Manchester, 35 years ago, some of my acquaintances were hand engravers to calico printers. They were of the aristocracy of the working classes, their earnings being fully double those of joiners and bricklayers. Where now are the hand engravers?

And where now are the block cutters and block calico printers, whose earnings were the only parallel amongst artisans, of the hand engravers? These are only specimen cases of what is continually going on in all staple trades; and I quote them in order to show the danger of a man never looking beyond the one narrow occupation to which he has been brought up, and which trades societies, I fear, do something to encourage and perpetuate. Once a joiner always a joiner, he must never touch a brick; once a bricklayer, always a bricklayer, he must never set a stone; all this seems to me to be excessively foolish! In all the textile manufactures there seems to be a revolution now in progress which deserves serious attention. According to the last report of the factory inspectors, there is a lessening demand for the labour of adult men notwithstanding the great increase of production. Taking all the textile

trades together, there is during the last 14 years a considerable decrease of hands in the weaving departments compared to the number of looms: thus in 1861 one person worked:—

	1861.		1875.
In Cotton.....	1¼ looms	.....	2⅝ looms
,, Wool, &c.	1¼ ,,	.....	1⅜ ,,
,, Worsted	1½ ,,	.....	2 ,,
,, Flax, &c.	1½ ,,	.....	1½ ,,

The flax trade alone shows no increase of looms as compared with the number of hands employed.

In cotton weaving there has been an actual decrease of some 3,000 persons employed since 1861. We have never yet fully overgot the cotton famine, showing that the trade needs very delicate handling in order to maintain its ground.

The demand for the work of children seems, however, to have increased in the spinning department of the cotton trade in Lancashire since 1861 from 40,000 to 67,000, whilst the men employed throughout the whole cotton trade have considerably decreased; another sign of the necessary cheapening process, and another warning that up-grown men require nimble brains as well as nimble fingers, in order that they may not be stranded through the inevitable changes brought about by the fertility of invention.

The iron trade, which was so brisk two years ago that it led us into a coal famine, has now collapsed so thoroughly as to pull down the coal industry with it; and many coal and iron mines must now either stop work, or work on at a loss. A little time ago I was told that the Bolckow and Vaughan Company were not working on Mondays, because so few men came to work that it cost the company more to work than to stop. Now, the newspapers tell us they propose to stop altogether, for want of orders—a very swift nemesis for the workmen and their St. Monday. The shares of this company have stood at 100 per cent premium, and the company employ 10,000 men. It looks as if trouble was coming, and as if extra prudence would be needed. Some light is thrown on this position of affairs also by the returns of our foreign trade. Our whole foreign trade has grown only one-fourth as rapidly from 1864 to 1874 as it did in the previous ten years. In 1872 our exports amounted to £254,000,000; in 1873 they were less by a million sterling, and in 1874 less by 17 millions sterling than in 1872.

What an excellent thing it would be if working men

could be persuaded to knock off some of their unnecessary expenditure, and so get ready for the possible crisis. Assuming that one-half the drink traffic is due to them, and that they could reduce their consumption by one-half, that would save over thirty millions sterling in a single year; enough to constitute 300,000 men their own permanent employers. Why, a single generation of abstinence would release the whole eight millions of workers from servitude.

The proportion of people who contribute only to luxurious tastes has increased far beyond the increase of population during the last 20 years. Thus private coachmen and grooms, gardeners and gamekeepers have doubled; whilst the general population has increased 25 per cent; carvers and gilders have also doubled; marble masons have nearly trebled during the same period; nurserymen have more than doubled in number; musical instrument makers have more than doubled; and gold and silver smiths and wood carvers have nearly doubled.

All these classes contribute mostly to the tastes of the rich amongst us, and this increase, if looked at alone, would tend to show how capital accumulates in few hands; but printers and lithographers, grocers and tobacconists, have also nearly doubled, and they contribute alike to the needs of all classes, so that the many have progressed in comfort if not in capital. The persons employed in the building trades have increased more than 40 per cent, which means that buildings generally have been improved in character, and that more public work has been done. The one point in which the working classes are inferior to the trading and upper classes is in their lesser command of capital; and I venture here to repeat what I have often asserted, that intelligence and prudence can by means of combination command for working men as much rational enjoyment as the rich man now has, and can make capitalists of all who are industrious and frugal. Will a better education make them so?

A few months ago I listened to the arguments of some skilled workmen in favour of higher wages, and one of the principal points urged was to the effect that with the wages then earned, it was as much as a family-man could do to keep straight, because the prices of commodities had risen so much. But the rise in necessary commodities is really not very great after all.

Statement of the weekly expenditure in 1859, of a family consisting of husband, wife, and three children, whose total wages averaged thirty shillings per week, as compared with the cost of the same articles in 1875, 1849, and 1839.—"Progress of Manchester," by D. Chadwick, British Association, 1861, revised by Dr. Watts.

Articles.	Expenditure in 1875.	s.	d.	Expenditure in 1859.	s.	d.
(I.) Bread, Flour, and Meal.						
8 4 lb. loaves (32 lbs.)	6½d. per 4lbs.	4	4	5½d. per 4 lb.	3	8
¼ a peck of meal.....	1s.10d.pr.pk.	0	11	1s.8d.per pk.	0	10
½ a doz. (6 lbs.) of flour ..	1s.10d.pr.dz.	0	11	1s.8d.per dz.	0	10
		6	2		5	4
(II.) Butchers' Meat and Bacon.						
5 lbs. of butchers' meat ..	8½d. per lb..	3	6½	6½d. per lb..	2	8½
2 lbs. of bacon.....	9d. „ ..	1	6	8d. „ ..	1	4
		5	0½		4	0½
(III.) Potatoes, Milk, and Vegetables.						
2 score of potatoes	1s. per score	2	0	1s. per score	2	0
7 quarts of milk.....	4d. per qt...	2	4	3d. per qt..	1	9
Vegetables	.....	0	6	.....	0	6
		4	10		4	3
(IV.) Groceries, Coals, &c.						
½ lb. of coffee	1s.4d. per lb.	0	8	1s.4d.per lb.	0	8
¼ lb. of tea	2s. 8d. „	0	8	4s. „	1	0
3 lbs. of sugar	4d. „	1	0	5d. „	1	3
2 lbs. of rice.....	2d. „	0	4	3d. „	0	6
1 lb. of butter	1s. 1d. „	1	1	1s. 1d. „	1	1
2 lbs. of treacle	2½d. „	0	5	2½d. „	0	5
1½ lbs. of soap.....	4d. „	0	6	4d. „	0	6
Coals	.....	1	6	.....	1	0
Candles.....	.....	0	6	.....	0	6
		6	8		6	11
Rent, taxes, and water ..	.....	4	0	.....	4	0
Clothing	.....	3	0	.....	3	0
Sundries	.....	2	5½	.....	2	5½
		9	5½		9	5½
Totals.....	.....	32	2	.....	30	0

Statement of the weekly expenditure in 1859, of a family consisting of husband, wife, and three children, whose total wages averaged thirty shillings per week, as compared with the cost of the same articles in 1875, 1849, and 1839.—"Progress of Manchester," by D. Chadwick, British Association, 1861, revised by Dr. Watts.—*Continued.*

Articles.	Expenditure in 1849.			Expenditure in 1889.		
		s.	d.		s.	d.
(I.) Bread, Flour, and Meal.						
8 4 lb. loaves (32 lbs.)	6d. per 4 lb..	4	0	8½d. per 4 lb.	5	8
¼ a peck of meal.....	1s.6d.per pk.	0	9	1s.4d.per pk.	0	8
½ a doz. (6 lbs.) of flour....	1s.10d.pr.dz.	0	11	2s.4d.per dz.	1	2
		5	8		7	6
(II.) Butchers' Meat and Bacon.						
5 lbs. of butchers' meat ..	7d. per lb...	2	11	6½d. per lb..	2	8½
2 lbs. of bacon.....	9d. „ ..	1	6	8d. „ ..	1	4
		4	5		4	0½
(III.) Potatoes, Milk, and Vegetables.						
2 score of potatoes	1s. per score	2	0	1s. per score	2	0
7 quarts of milk.....	3d. per qt...	1	9	3d. per qt...	1	9
Vegetables	.....	0	6	.....	0	6
		4	3		4	3
(IV.) Groceries, Coals, &c.						
½ lb. of coffee	1s.4d. per lb.	0	8	2s. per lb...	1	0
¼ lb. of tea.....	4s. 4d. „	1	1	6s. „ ..	1	6
3 lbs. of sugar.....	5d. „	1	3	7d. „ ..	1	9
2 lbs. of rice.....	3d. „	0	6	4d. „ ..	0	8
1 lb. of butter	1s. „	1	0	1s. 1d. „ ..	1	1
2 lbs. of treacle	3d. „	0	6	4d. „ ..	0	8
1½ lbs. of soap.....	5d. „	0	7½	5d. „ ..	0	7½
Coals	.....	1	0	.....	1	0
Candles.....	.....	0	6	.....	0	6
		7	1½		8	9½
Rent, taxes, and water ..	.....	4	0	.....	4	0
Clothing	.....	3	0	.....	3	0
Sundries	.....	2	5½	.....	2	5½
		9	5½		9	5½
Totals.....	.....	30	11	.....	34	0½

Now, don't let me be misunderstood when I say that such an argument as the one given above (when generalised) can have, and ought to have, no weight; because it would require that men should be paid more in times of famine than in times of plenty; that men should eat more in proportion when the store is less. I think that men are right to seek an increase of wages so long as the demand for their labour is not thereby lessened; but I think that instead of quarrelling with their employers and ceasing to work at all, when they can't get a rise, the right way out of the difficulty is to dispense with the employers altogether. And now I want to ask the plain question, is society always to be divided as at present, into classes which tend to perpetuate themselves, or will the entire freedom which has been achieved under the law, lead to efforts towards self and social improvement? The last session of Parliament passed a bill enabling corporations to borrow money from the Loan Commissioners at 3½ per cent. for the improvement of artisan dwellings; and if such places as are unhealthy are acquired at proper prices, and re-built and let at moderate rentals, corporations may make a good profit out of the transactions. I can't object to such an act on sanitary and moral grounds so long as its operation is confined to local authorities; but I declare that if working men were moral and prudent it would be entirely unnecessary; they could then well do for themselves what Parliament is doing for them, and with more advantage than Parliament can give. I have already shown how enormous a sum in the mass is spent on merely luxurious, not to say on vicious, indulgences. Now let me show how money slips away through mere carelessness. The ordinary subscription to a building society is 10s. per share per month for a £100 share—£6 a year. Workmen's cottages of good quality can be put up for from £100 to £150 each. To borrow £150 will cost £7. 10s. in interest for the first year (decreasing every succeeding year), in addition to the sub

scription, or £13. 10s. in the whole for the first year. But the present rent (4s. a week) is only £10. 8s., and the working man can't afford to give up any indulgences; how is the balance to be made up? I'll tell you. In the end of 1860 I joined a co-operative store, and I should think my purchases averaged 20s. to 25s. a week. I paid 20s. when I entered, and happening to need money about 1870, I looked to my pass book, and found, that without any effort whatever on my part, without watching or tending in any way, my 20s. had grown into £55, simply by the additions of dividends on purchases. Now, take the case of a family whose income is 30s. a week, the whole of which is spent at the co-operative store. The average dividend will be 7½ per cent. or 2s. 3d. a week, or £5. 17s. 0d. a year; being £2. 15s. more than the balance over the present rent needed to make up the subscription to the building club; which balance may be appropriated to taxes and repairs and decorations.

Need the prudent working man complain of his fate? Ought he not to wake up to the duties of a citizen, and instead of talking continually about working-class interests, to talk of the interests of the nation. Here we have him freed from rent by the simple utterance of a few words and the writing of his name; his own landlord, sitting under his own roof, in a house which he may decorate at his leisure, and enjoy in the confidence, that although the possession has not cost him even a pint of beer or a pipe of tobacco, it is, nevertheless, his own; a legacy coming out of the philanthropic thoughts of others, which can only be repaid (if any debt be felt) by doing something good and noble for posterity. But working men have frequently to change their residences, and building society investments do not therefore suit them! Well, we'll find another scheme presently.

In 1862 I contributed a paper to the British Association at Cambridge, setting forth the advisability of employers meeting the co-operative principle, by the establishment of

industrial partnerships, in which after paying ordinary wages, they should divide any excess over average profits amongst the workers; and my anticipation was that wages would then settle down at a minimum rate, whilst the result of successful years would be given in profits,—all strikes and quarrels, and even arbitrations, being thus avoided. Several hopeful experiments were made, and until the unwonted prosperity of the iron and coal trades, two years ago, they seemed to be working well. But workmen throughout the country then seemed to think that the ball was at their feet, and that trades unions could make them masters at once, without capital and without effort; and so the colliers at Messrs. Briggs', of Methley, and the ironworkers at Messrs. Fox, Head, and Co.'s, of Middlesborough, preferred the trades unions to industrial partnerships, and the partnerships arrangements came to an end. I wonder what these workmen think of it now! The workmen at the Ouseburn Engine Works, at Newcastle, —which was started during the nine-hours' strike,—many of whom were shareholders, and knew that the concern was being worked at a loss, yet demanded a ten per cent rise in wages, and so helped the company into liquidation and themselves into the streets. These workmen appear to be fitted at present only for such partnerships as Messrs. John Crossley and Co.'s, where three quarters of the capital is in the hands of the governor, and where the management is entirely out of reach of the workmen.

And yet if one could drive a grain of sense into working men in general, what a future is within their grasp!

The average income of working class families was, before the late general rise of wages, about 25s. a-week, and there are in England and Wales about four millions of such families. These wages if spent at co-operative stores, averaging 7½ per cent dividend on purchases, would realise in a single year £19,500,000 of profit, being capital enough to find permanent employment for 195,000 workers at £100 each.

I give here a Table shewing the accumulations which would result from the whole of the working classes purchasing at co-operative stores, and investing the dividends on purchases in manufacturing operations, which average 10 per cent profit per annum, for 17 years.

£			£		
19,500,000	first investment.		268,979,795		
1,950,000	add 10 per cent.		19,500,000		
			26,897,979		
21,450,000	at the end of 1st year				
19,500,000			315,377,774	at end of	10th year.
2,145,000			19,500,000		
			31,537,777		
43,095,000	„	2nd year.			
19,500,000			366,415,551	„	11th year.
4,309,500			19,500,000		
			36,641,555		
66,904,500	„	3rd year.			
19,500,000			422,557,106	„	12th year.
6,690,450			19,500,000		
			42,255,710		
93,094,950	„	4th year.			
19,500,000			484,312,816	„	13th year.
9,309,495			19,500,000		
			48,431,281		
121,904,445	„	5th year.			
19,500,000			552,244,097	„	14th year.
12,190,444			19,500,000		
			55,224,409		
153,594,889	„	6th year.			
19,500,000			626,968,506	„	15th year.
15,359,488			19,500,000		
			62,696,850		
188,454,377	„	7th year.			
19,500,000			709,165,356	„	16th year.
18,845,437			19,500,000		
			70,916,535		
226,799,814	„	8th year.			
19,500,000			799,581,891	„	17th year.
22,679,981					
268,979,795	„	9th year.			

If this course were adopted and the dividends thus invested in productive employment at 10 per cent per annum profit, instead of being spent in present indulgences, the result at the end of 17 years would be a fund of £799,581,891, or enough to permanently employ the whole of the working population of England and Wales, reckoning two workers to a family, and to give them the whole results of their labour; for they would have become their own shopkeepers, and their own employers, and there would remain only three classes in existence amongst us — working-men capitalists, middle-class capitalists with no use for their

capital, and land-owners; with agricultural workers for tenants, and town landlords with artizan tenants.

Of course this is a fancy picture, and so is the initial force of a pound of coal, only about 10 per cent of which is realised in practice; and so especially is every picture which depends upon the human will to realise; nevertheless it is something to shew, that all the evils of which working men can now reasonably complain, if not of their own making, are at any rate of their own keeping; and that it would be quite as rational for a man who goes voluntarily and intentionally into a beer house to get drunk, to lay the fault upon the existence of the publican, as it is for working men to lay the fault of their poverty, their low wages, or any other evil from which they now suffer, either upon their employers, or anybody else except themselves. And, fanciful as my picture is, it is mathematically demonstrable, and will become sectionally possible, as men rise to the perception of its importance; it is even now in progress in Lancashire and Yorkshire especially, and to some extent in almost every part of the country.

That 19½ millions sterling per annum, which now goes to the shopkeepers, is simply a toll levied by the middle classes upon the ignorance of the masses; for the existence of co-operative stores is proof that the distribution of wealth need not cost more than 5 per cent, whilst its present cost varies from that amount to 100 per cent, and averages at least 12½ per cent. So also the profits of the manufacturer and merchant are likewise tolls levied upon the ignorance of the workers; and these profits amount to 10 per cent at least upon the value of the goods; and if we assume that value to be represented by the income of the working classes (and we know it to be very much more), it will amount to £38,500,000 a year, which plus £19,500,000=£58,000,000 as the annual prize to be gained by education and prudence, by rising to a proper conception of manhood, and by fulfilling the duties which must accompany the possession of power, social and political.

There exist at present some eight hundred co-operative stores, and they do now distribute annually about £12,000,000 sterling in produce, at a cost of about 5 per cent, and they realise about a million a year in profits. A large proportion of this profit is withdrawn quarterly, and

spent on necessaries or luxuries, and thus the growth of the redemption fund is hindered; still there are great accumulations of capital, which are concreted in buildings and fixtures for the purposes of the stores, or used up in building societies connected with the stores, or invested in joint-stock companies by their individual owners. The best of these stores devote a portion of their profits to education; they have libraries, reading rooms, lectures, and some of them elementary and science classes. Some 500 of these stores have subscribed capital according to their number of members, and have established a Wholesale Society in Manchester, for the sale of groceries and provisions, drapery, boots and shoes, &c., to the retail stores.

This Wholesale Store was started 11 years ago, in a very obscure street, called Balloon-street, lying between Shudehill, Hanover-street, and Corporation-street. In its first half year, ending April, 1864, its business amounted to £5,962. Its present transactions are about £2,500,000 a year, and are still rapidly increasing. It turns over its capital about eight times in the year, at a cost of less than 1½ per cent on the turn over. This wholesale store has branch establishments in Newcastle-on-Tyne and in London. There is also a wholesale store in Glasgow which turns over about £500,000 a year, in serving the retail stores in Scotland; and these wholesale stores have buyers of produce permanently established in Ireland and in Holland, and they send buyers out to the United States. This Manchester Wholesale Store has also set up the manufacture of biscuits and sweets at Crumpsall, of boots and shoes at Leicester, and of soap at Durham, and is doing a rapidly-increasing trade at each of these places.

Of course all this is but a very speck of the picture which I have drawn; but we know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the proximate or remote result of this leavening depends entirely upon the character of the receptive mass. The revolution is mathematically possible in 17 years; whether it will be morally possible in 50 or 100 years depends much upon the activity of School Boards and the various institutes for secondary instruction; somewhat more upon the characters of co-operative leaders; and much more upon the aspirants who lead, or seek to lead, the trades unions, the friendly societies, and political associations of working men. These aspirants ought to

feel that they are responsible for the immediate future of the working man; that they can direct him to the acquirement of a peaceful independence and real political power, or lead him astray after the merest red herring trail, resulting in the continuance of quarrels with employers, or useless demands upon the Government for matters which are entirely within their own control.

There are some working class investments off the line, yet to be noticed, which, whilst further exhibiting the power of the working classes, may or may not forward the fulfilment of the scheme which I have pictured. In a paper, before the Statistical Society in November, 1872, I set forth eleven joint-stock cotton-spinning and manufacturing companies, with an aggregate capital of £755,000, mostly subscribed by working men, and all of which companies had passed through the cotton famine and had risen again to various premiums of from 5 per cent to 100 per cent for their shares. This process has gone on rapidly ever since, and notably in Oldham, where during the last two years some ten extra companies have been started with an aggregate capital of about half a million sterling.

I have had an opportunity of examining the share lists of some of these companies, and find them composed of about 70 per cent in number of working-men shareholders, although only of some 30 per cent of cotton operatives; and what is most singular is, that the cotton operatives who are shareholders in the mills where they are themselves employed, do not exceed 3 per cent: so that they have not the slightest influence in the management of the concerns. The working-class investments extend also to coal companies, iron companies, paper manufacturing companies, &c.; and out of this progress I gather another hint for working-class leaders, for which I am again indebted to Oldham. You are aware that there has lately been a strike there of six weeks' duration, which was ultimately settled on the understanding that the spinners are to earn as much for the lessened hours of work as before the late Labour Act.

You will not be surprised that I should think the men foolish for striking; on that subject I have had nothing to learn for the last 20 years; but I fancy that you will agree with me when I tell you that, although the men have won the strike, it will take nearly three years of work to make up for their pecuniary loss, incurred by the stoppage of

work, and that on the assumption that these manufacturing companies average £50,000 each of capital, then these smart Oldham workmen have practically destroyed two such companies of their own, in order to be revenged on their employers. The Oldham leaders in the strike have therefore cost the workpeople £100,000, or capital enough to have made 1,000 of them their own employers *en permanence*.

Well, what will be the result of all these investments which I have spoken of as being off the line? If the working classes improve rapidly, and prudential investment becomes general, then most of our future commercial expansion will be in the direction of joint-stock enterprise, and a large proportion of working men will have a dependance beyond mere wages, and will be able to live in comfort in old age, instead of burdening their children or their neighbours; whilst if the progress be not general, it will simply convert the prudent working men into employers, with whose accumulated capital the ignorant mass will continue to be exploited.

And why do I speak of these investments as being off the line? For this reason:—The dividends of the co-operative stores are upon purchases, so that a large and poor family, whose purchases are necessarily large, is a large gainer; and, if all the accumulated dividends were transferred bodily to the wholesale store, to be by its managers invested in manufacturing, then the profits of such manufacturing would be distributed to the retail stores in the proportion of the members of each store, and after paying 5 per cent on each member's investments, the remainder would go to increase the dividend on purchases, so that all would be benefitted according to their needs; whereas, on the chaotic joint-stock company plan, the dividends are entirely upon capital. "Unto him who hath, &c."

In the early part of my lecture I referred to agricultural labourers, and I am prepared for the question, how are they to be helped? Well, the co-operative store will add from 7½ to 10 per cent to their present wages, and if they can agree to save these dividends, they may either earn profits in the Wholesale store, build cottages and save rent at home, or be devoted to the purchase of stock and implements for co-operative farming, that is, farming by the managers of the store. How are they to get the land?

They are to watch the falling out of farm leases, and to offer to rent them; and in many cases the landlords would be glad of their offer and would help them to stock; and in any case where their offer was refused, it would be a great moral benefit if another farm could be got within reasonable distance to move off bodily to it, and leave the new comer and the landlord to find fresh hands.

The agricultural labourers' lot is at present very hard; but a co-operative store is a cheap expedient to point the way upward, and if it should end in adding 7½ or 10 per cent to wages without quarrels, without strikes, without expatriation, that is a result not to be despised; and it is possible that, before this result is reached throughout the country, Parliament may have decreed that the increased increment of the value of land is the property of the nation, so that all land speculation will be at an end, whilst the return to the original position, the land of the nation, the property of the nation, will be inaugurated.

What proportion of this vision of the future it may be my lot to see realised I cannot tell; but so many beneficial changes have occurred within my recollection that I am sanguine of great progress, and I am also quite confident that the great evils, which will from time to time be foretold as certain to arise out of these changes, will not come to pass; for society will be as gradually and as safely moulded into new forms in the future, as it has been in the past.

At present the average life of the working and poor class is about 24 years, the average of the middle class 44 years, and the average of the aristocracy somewhat more.

Edwin Chadwick says that if supplied with the means, he could build a town to ensure any average mortality from 10 in the thousand upwards; and I say that the means are at the command of the class whose average mortality is now over 40 per thousand per annum, and that they can command any amount of improvement, physically and mentally, by merely willing it, without sacrifice or effort, and that the grand problem of the future is wrapped up in the one sentence—do they wish for it?

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